

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1395

C O N F I D E N T I A L STOCKHOLM 544

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SW, CI

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR EDELSTAM VISIT TO U.S.

REF: (A) STATE 24678; (B) STOCKHOLM 468

SUMMARY: I CALLED TODAY ON MFA DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS (WACHTMEISTER) TO EMPHASIZE STABLER STATEMENTS TO LEIFLAND AND WARN HIM THAT GOS ATTEMPT TO SELL EDELSTAM AS PRIVATE CITIZEN WITHOUT SIGNIFICANCE TO BILATERAL RELATIONS WOULD NOT WASH IN WASHINGTON. WACHTMEISTER REPLIED THAT GOS "COULD NOT" FORBID EDELSTAM TO GO TO WASHINGTON AND MAKE SPEECH BUT EDELSTAM HAD ASSURED FOREIGN MINISTER ANDERSSON HE WOULD NOT MAKE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST USG IN HIS PUBLIC REMARKS. I SAID EDELSTAM'S PUBLIC PERFORMANCE TO DATE DID NOT INSPIRE CONFIDENCE. I SAID I HOPED EDELSTAM, IF NOT HIS POWERLESS GOVERNMENT WOULD GIVE FURTHER THOUGHT TO THIS OMINOUS SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

1. I CALLED ON MFA DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS (WACHTMEISTER) THIS MORNING TO RE-STATE AND REINFORCE STABLER MESSAGE TO LEIFLAND (REF A). I TOLD HIM THAT, ON INSTRUCTION, I WAS THERE TO EMPHASIZE CONCERN OF USG REGARDING PROSPECTIVE EDELSTAM TRIP TO U.S. I THEN MADE POINTS IN PARA ONE OF
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REF A, ADDING THAT I WISHED TO COMMENT ON WHAT MFA HAD TOLD US,

VIZ. THAT EDELSTAM'S WAS A PRIVATE TRIP AND BORE NO RELATIONS TO GOS (REF B).

2. I SAID THE SWEDISH PRACTICE OF ARBITRARILY SPLITTING THE PERSONALITY OF PUBLIC FIGURES, DECLARING THEM FROM TIME TO TIME TO BE PRIVATE PERSONS AND THEN REFUSING ALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT THEY SAY OR DO, WAS NOT UNDERSTOOD IN WASHINGTON AND WOULD NOT BE IN THE EDELSTAM CASE. I CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT THERE WAS A STRONG INTEREST ON BOTH SIDES TO GET SWEDISH

AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BACK TO NORMAL AND IT WOULD BE TRULY BIZARRE IF THIS TOTALLY UNNECESSARY VENTURE THREW THINGS OFF THE TRACK.

3. WACHTMEISTER SAID HE HAD ANTICIPATED PURPOSE OF MY CALL AND HAD SOME REMARKS TO MAKE. HE SAID GOS WAS MOST EAGER FOR RETURN TO NORMALCY IN BILATERAL RELATIONS AND EARNESTLY HOPED THERE WOULD SOON BE ANNOUNCEMENT OF EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS. HE SAID EDELSTAM INCIDENT POINTED UP IMPORTANCE OF HAVING AMBASSADORS ON THE SCENE. IF THERE WERE, EDELSTAM MATTER COULD BE PUT IN PERSPECTIVE. HE SAID I HAD GOOD ACCESS TO HIGH LEVELS IN STOCKHOLM PERHAPS, BUT LEIFLAND DID NOT IN WASHINGTON AND THUS WAS HANDICAPPED.

4. WACHTMEISTER SAID BOTH OUR COUNTRIES VALUED FREEDOM OF SPEECH. EDELSTAM'S ACCEPTANCE OF THIS INVITATION TO APPEAR WITH AN EXPERT DISCUSSION PANEL ON CHILE AND PERHAPS TO MAKE SOME OTHER TALKS WAS IN THAT GREAT TRADITION. HE SAID EDELSTAM IS ON LEAVE UNTIL MAY 1 AND HIS TIME IS ENTIRELY HIS OWN; HE CAN GO WHERE HE WISHES AND DO WHAT HE WISHES. WACHTMEISTER SAID GOS "COULD NOT" FORBID HIM TO GO TO U.S. "THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF DOING THAT," HE SAID.

5. WACHTMEISTER SAID WE COULD BE CERTAIN, HOWEVER, THAT EDELSTAM WOULD NOT "ACCUSE THE USG" AND SPECIFICALLY WOULD NOT CHARGE USG OF COMPLICITY IN CHILE COUP. HE SAID EDELSTAM DOES NOT KNOW ANYTHING FIRSTHAND ABOUT COMPLICITY, IF ANY. HE SAID EDELSTAM HAD ASSURED FOREIGN MINISTER ANDERSSON THAT HE WOULD TALK ONLY ABOUT HIS OWN EXPERIENCES IN SANTIAGO AND HIS VIEWS ON THE ALLENDE GOVERNMENT.

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6. IN REPLY, I SAID I WISHED TO REITERATE WHAT I HAD SAID ABOUT THE ATTEMPT TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PERSONALITY OF A HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL WHEN HE APPEARS IN AN INTENSELY POLITICAL ROLE. THIS WOULD NOT BE UNDERSTOOD IN WASHINGTON. I SAID I DID NOT THINK IT WOULD BE UNDERSTOOD HERE IF THE SHOE WERE ON THE OTHER FOOT, IF, FOR EXAMPLE, A SENIOR AMERICAN DIPLOMAT WERE TO COME "PRIVATELY" TO STOCKHOLM AND TO

ADDRESS A POLITICAL RALLY IN SUPPORT OF INGA THORSSON'S DEMAND THAT GOS GIVE ITS FOREIGN AID TO THE COUNTRIES WHICH NEED IT MOST AND NOT TO ITS POLITICAL FAVORITES. I SAID IT WAS INCONCEIVABLE THAT USG WOULD ALLOW SUCH A PERFORMANCE.

7. I SAID THERE WAS ANOTHER POINT THAT WAS BEING SKATED OVER TOO CASUALLY. I SAID EDELSTAM WAS WELCOME TO COME TO THE U.S. TO GO ON THE UNIVERSITY CIRCUIT OR WHATEVER AND SAY WHAT HE PLEASED. HE HAD ALREADY BEEN TO THE U.S. AND SAID HIS PIECE, AND WE HAD NOT UTTERED A WORD. HOWEVER, THIS FEBRUARY 28 EVENT WAS NOT AN ACADEMIC SEMINAR BUT A POLITICAL EVENT WITH A DOMESTIC POLITICAL PURPOSE. I SAID USG HAD NOTHING AGAINST THIS; THIS IS A FREE COUNTRY. BUT GOS HAD TO CONSIDER WHETHER IT WAS DESIRABLE THAT ONE OF ITS SENIOR OFFICIALS SHOULD ENTER THE U.S. POLITICAL ARENA.

8. I SAID ONLY ENCOURAGEMENT I DREW FROM CONVERSATION WAS EDELSTAM'S ASSURANCES TO FOREIGN MINISTER ANDERSSON BUT, RECALLING EDELSTAM'S RECENT STYLE OF PUBLIC ADDRESS, I WAS NOT AT EASE. I SAID IF GOS REMAINED POWERLESS, PERHAPS EDELSTAM MIGHT THINK AGAIN; IF NOT, WE WOULD HAVE TO WAIT ON EVENTS.

9. WACHTMEISTER CONCLUDED BY STRESSING GOS POSITION THAT EDELSTAM COULD NOT BE ORDERED TO STAY HOME. HE HAD EARLIER USED THE PHRASE "SACRED COW". I SAID THAT PERHAPS IT WOULD COME DOWN TO A DECISION WHETHER GOS ATTACHED GREATER IMPORTANCE TO RESTORING NORMAL RELATIONS WITH U.S. THEN TO CARE AND FEEDING OF SACRED COWS.

10. COMMENT: I CONCLUDE THAT PALME JUDGES LEFTIST HUE AND CRY OVER MUZZLING OF EDELSTAM WOULD BE MORE THAN HE COULD BEAR. HE HOPES TO SKATE THROUGH BY PERSUADING EDELSTAM TO GO EASY ON WHAT HE SAYS - A THIN-ICE PROPOSITION, INDEED.
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